

A Career in Nursing

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Interested in caring for people. Ever considered a career in nursing? Nurses take care of the sick and injured and help prevent disease, but there are no limits to what the job can entail. Nursing offers many individual challenges, the opportunity to do different things, and the chance to work in different places. It is a profession that offers a variety of employment and career opportunities, from working in a hospital and clinic to doing research work. Some nurses are even self-employed.

Information for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses working in the State of Hawaii are presented in this occupational profile. Find out what they do, their wages, employment, job outlook, education or training requirements and other information that can help prepare for a career in nursing.



Registered Nurses (RNs) assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, and maintain medical records. They administer nursing care to ill, injured, convalescent, or disabled patients. They may advise patients on health maintenance and disease prevention or provide case management. Licensing or registration is required. Advanced practice nursing is practiced by RNs who have specialized formal, post-basic education and who function in highly autonomous and specialized roles, such as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. Duties and responsibilities for RNs are usually determined by their work environment.

- ❖ *Hospital nurses* are staff nurses, who provide bedside care and perform medical procedures. They may supervise licensed practical nurses and nursing aides.
- ❖ *Office nurses* care for outpatients in physicians' offices, clinics, and emergency medical centers. Some may also perform routine laboratory and office work.
- ❖ *Public health nurses* work in government, private agencies, schools, retirement communities, and other community settings. They work with individuals, groups, and families to improve the overall health of communities. They instruct

others about health issues, disease prevention, nutrition, and childcare.

- ❖ *Occupational health nurses* provide nursing care at worksites to employees, customers and others with injuries and illnesses. They provide health counseling and assess work settings to identify potential health or safety problems.
- ❖ *Nursing home nurses* manage nursing care for residents. They assess residents' health conditions, develop treatment plans, and supervise licensed practical nurses and nursing aides. They may also perform difficult procedures such as starting intravenous fluids.
- ❖ *Home health nurses* provide periodic nursing care to patients at home. They assess patients' home environments, care for, and instruct patients and their families. They must be able to work independently, and may supervise home health aides.
- ❖ *Advanced practice registered nurses* (APRNs) have advanced education and training. They must meet higher educational and clinical practice requirements beyond the basic nursing education and licensing required of all RNs. APRNs generally work in hospitals, ambulatory care and community health clinics. APRN's include:
 - *Nurse practitioners* who provide in-depth patient care in various specialty areas such as family and adult health, pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatric mental health, and women's health. Some are authorized to prescribe medication;
 - *Nurse anesthetists* who are qualified to administer anesthesia under the direction of a doctor during surgical, obstetrical, or diagnostic procedures. They monitor a patient's vital signs and provide a report about the patient's condition to the doctor; and
 - *Clinical Nurse Specialists* who function autonomously as an expert practitioner with educator, researcher, and consultant roles.

As mentioned, the work environment usually determines the specific duties of RNs. But some general tasks include: provide health care, first aid, and immunization in facilities such as schools, hospitals, and industry; observe patient's skin color, dilation of pupils, and computerized equipment to monitor vital signs; record patient's medical information and vital signs; administer local, inhalation, intravenous, and other anesthetics; prepare patients for and assist with examinations; order, interpret, and evaluate diagnostic tests to identify and assess patient's condition; prepare rooms, sterile instruments, equipment and supplies, and hand items to surgeon; prescribe or recommend drugs or other forms of treatment, such as physical therapy, inhalation therapy, or related therapeutic procedures; and supervise other personnel staff.



Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) provide basic bedside care for ill, injured, convalescent, or disabled persons in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, private homes, group homes, and similar institutions. They may work under the supervision of a registered nurse. Licensing is required.

Basic nursing tasks performed by LPNs include: administer specified medication, orally or by subcutaneous or intramuscular injection, and note time and amount on patients' charts; provide medical treatment and personal care to patients in private home settings; take and record patients' vital signs; dress wounds, give enemas, douche, alcohol rubs, and massages;

apply compresses, ice bags, and hot water bottles; observe patients and report adverse reactions to medication or treatment to medical personnel in charge; bathe, dress, and assist patients in walking and turning; assemble and use such equipment as catheters, tracheotomy tubes, and oxygen suppliers; collect samples, such as urine, blood, and sputum from patients for testing and perform routine laboratory tests on samples; sterilize equipment and supplies, using germicides, sterilizer, or autoclave; supervise nursing or home health aides; and perform clerical tasks in outpatient settings or doctors' offices.

Where Nurses Work...

As expected, health services is the top employing industry with nearly 87 percent of nurses employed in the industry. Federal and state governments are next with a combined employment of about 9 percent. Nurses work in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, doctors' offices, public health facilities, long-term facilities, schools, businesses, mental health agencies, government, and the military. Some are self-employed. In hospitals and nursing homes, nurses generally work in eight-hour shifts and may work a day, evening, or night shift that includes weekends and holidays. They may spend long periods walking and standing. The work may be strenuous with lifting, moving and helping patients around. Nurses must be able to handle emergency situations.



They may also need to follow safety policies and procedures when working with patients who have infectious diseases, equipment that use radiation, toxic chemicals or other hazards.

Wages ...

RNs earned an average hourly wage of \$27.10 in 2001. Their average annual wage was \$56,370. Wages for RNs were well above the statewide average annual wage of \$33,010 for all occupations. RNs working in Hawaii earned nearly 17 percent more than their counterparts nationwide at \$48,240. LPNs received an average hourly wage of \$15.34 or annually \$31,900 in 2001. Their earnings were slightly above national averages. Overall, nurses working in Honolulu MSA (Island of Oahu) were paid the highest wages.

Wages For Nurses 2001				
Area	Registered Nurses		Lic. Practical Nurses	
	Average Hourly	Average Annual	Average Hourly	Average Annual
U.S.	\$ 23.19	\$ 48,240	\$ 15.14	\$ 31,490
Hawaii	\$ 27.10	\$ 56,370	\$ 15.34	\$ 31,900
Honolulu MSA	\$ 27.73	\$ 57,670	\$ 15.56	\$ 32,360
Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, 2001.				

Employment ...

Nursing is the largest healthcare occupation in Hawaii, and for the nation. The total statewide employment for nurses was 10,600 in 2001. Registered nurses accounted for most of the employment with 8,120 employed in the profession. Employment of licensed practical nurses was at 2,480. Nurses primarily work in Honolulu MSA.

What is the employment outlook for nurses? Job opportunities are anticipated in this career field between the years 2000 and 2010. Employment of nurses is expected to grow by 20.2 percent. This is faster than the projected average rate of 12.2 percent for all occupations in Hawaii.

Registered nurses will grow the fastest at 21.3 percent, while licensed practical nurses will expand by 15.7 percent. Registered nurses will be one of four occupations, statewide, that will produce more job vacancies from job growth than from job separations, which result from an employee leaving the workforce, retiring, or dying. About 330 job openings are expected annually for registered nurses with 170 being new jobs. Licensed practical nurses will acquire a total of 80 job openings on an annual basis.

Employment in nursing homes and home health care services is expected to increase due to a growing elderly population, a preference for home care services, and technological advances in medicine. Such advances will make it possible to be treated outside of a hospital setting. A rise in employment is also expected in physicians' offices, outpatient clinics, and rehabilitation establishments.

Projected Employment Growth & Job Openings For Nurses 2000 – 2010 State of Hawaii					
<u>Occupation Title</u>	Projected Employment Growth		Average Annual Job Openings Due To		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Growth</u>	<u>Separations</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total, All Occupations	68,230	12.2	6,820	14,730	21,560
Registered Nurses	1,680	21.3	170	160	330
Licensed Practical Nurses	310	15.7	30	50	80
TOTAL	1,900	20.2	200	210	410
Source: <i>Employment Outlook for Industries and Occupations 2000–2010</i> . Research and Statistics Office, Hawaii State Dept. of Labor and Industrial Relations.					

The Supply ...

In 2002, the number of persons who completed RN training amounted to 410, while those completing LPN training totaled 99.

Required Preparation ...

People who want to become nurses must graduate from an approved nursing program offered by an accredited institution. Nursing programs vary in emphasis and length of study. After high school, licensed practical nurses must complete postsecondary vocational training which lasts about a year. Training programs are offered at community colleges. Completion of training leads to a certificate.



Associate and bachelors' degree programs provide basic training for registered nurses. The associate's degree usually requires at least two years of full-time academic work after high school at a community college. It takes 4 to 5 years at a college or university to get a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. Upon completion of a nursing program, graduates are eligible to take the national nursing licensing examination. The bachelor's degree in nursing provides the foundation for career advancements or graduate study in different fields of nursing. Specialized nursing such as nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist positions require additional training leading to a master's degree.

A background in science and mathematics is helpful since nursing programs are heavy on science. Courses in the liberal arts are also beneficial since nurses must be able to communicate with patients, families, and staff.

Gaining experience by working in a medical facility can also help prepare for a nursing profession. Hospitals and other healthcare institutions offer voluntary programs in which individuals considering a career in nursing can observe the profession and actively are part of the workplace environment.

Licensing ...

Completing an approved nursing program alone does not qualify a person to practice. Licensing is required in the State of Hawaii for practical nurse, registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, and advanced practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority. The Hawaii Board of Nursing is responsible for issuing these licenses. The following provides information on licensing requirements, examinations, and fees for each specific license.

Licensed Practical Nurse

Professional requirements: Be responsible for reading, being knowledgeable and maintaining current knowledge of the Hawaii Statutes and Rules relating to nursing and the amendments adopted throughout the years for the duration of the applicant/licensee's nursing career.

Education requirements: 1) Graduate of a board-approved nursing program in the U.S. Note: If you have graduated from an accredited nursing school or state board recognized nursing program and have passed the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) exam in another state, you must have been licensed in the originating state before you can be licensed in Hawaii. You must request an application for license by endorsement. 2) Foreign school graduates and Armed Forces program graduates can contact the licensing agency for licensing requirements

(Only the Fort Sam Houston nursing program is recognized; no other military program is recognized).

Examination: Pass the National Council Licensure Exam/Computerized Adaptive Testing (NCLEX/CAT)

Fees: \$40 for application, \$30 for 2-year license, and \$70 for biennial compliance resolution fund. Renewal every 2 years is \$20.

As of July 29, 2002, there were 2,425 licenses currently active in the State of Hawaii.

Registered Nurse

Professional requirements: Same as for Licensed Practical Nurse.

Education requirements: 1) Graduate of a board-approved nursing program in the U.S. Note: If you have graduated from an accredited nursing school or state board recognized nursing program and have passed the NCLEX exam in another state, you must have been licensed in the originating state before you can be licensed in Hawaii. You must request an application for license by endorsement. 2) Foreign school graduates and Armed Forces program graduates can contact the licensing agency for licensing requirements.

Examination: Pass the National Council Licensure Exam/Computerized Adaptive Testing (NCLEX/CAT) for registered nurses

Fees: \$40 for application, \$30 for 2-year license, and \$70 for biennial compliance resolution fund. Renewal every 2 years is \$20.

As of July 29, 2002, there were 9,936 licenses for registered nurse currently active in Hawaii.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) receive recognition from the Board of Nursing as a nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse midwife, or certified nurse anesthetist.

Professional requirements: 1) Hold a current, unencumbered Registered Nurse license in Hawaii and provide verification of unencumbered license as a registered nurse and as an APRN or similar designation in all states in which applicant is currently licensed. 2) The APRN is responsible for notifying the Hawaii Board of Nursing of any disciplinary action taken against any nursing license/APRN recognition in any other state or U.S. jurisdiction within 30 days of the action. 3) Be responsible for reading, being knowledgeable and maintaining current knowledge of the Hawaii Statutes and Rules relating to nursing and the amendments adopted throughout the years for the duration of the applicant/licensee's nursing career.

Education requirements: 1) Master's degree in nursing; OR 2) Current certification in the nursing specialty from a national certifying body recognized by the Hawaii Board of Nursing.

Examination: None

Fees: \$40 for application, \$30 for 2-year recognition, and \$70 for biennial compliance resolution fund. Recognition renewal every 2 years is \$20.

As of July 29, 2002, there were 389 active recognitions for APRNs currently active in Hawaii.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (Prescriptive Authority)

An Advanced Practice Registered Nurse - Prescriptive Authority (APRN-RX) is an advanced practice registered nurse with the authority to prescribe medication in accordance with an established formulary.

It is important to remember that Hawaii does not reciprocate with any other state or jurisdiction. Each applicant is required to meet requirements according to Hawaii laws and rules.

Professional requirements: 1) Hold a current, unencumbered recognition as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse and be currently licensed as a Registered Nurse in Hawaii. 2) Complete the Collegial Working Relationship Agreement (between a recognized APRN and a Physician) form. 3) Be held accountable for knowing and complying with the laws and rules of advanced practice registered nurse prescriptive authority practice as failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

Experience requirements: 1,000 hours of clinical experience in an institution (hospital, health maintenance organization, home health agency, hospice program, community health center receiving State or federal funds, state agency, clinic, physician's office, long term care facility, and authorized contractor of the State) as a Hawaii Nursing Board-recognized APRN practitioner in the applicant's nursing practice specialty, within a 3-year time period immediately preceding the date of application.

Education requirements: 1) Master's degree in clinical nursing or nursing science. 2) Current certification of nursing practice specialty from a national certifying body recognized by the Hawaii Board of Nursing. 3) At least 30 contact hours of advanced pharmacology education, including advanced pharmacotherapeutics.

Examination: None

Fees: \$50 for application, \$40 for 2-year authorization, and \$70 for biennial compliance resolution fund. Authorization renewal every 2 years is \$40.

As of July 29, 2002, there were 84 active authorizations.

Other Qualifications ...

Nursing is a profession of great responsibility. If you are interested in a nursing career, you should be compassionate and have a strong desire to help others. The well being of patients must be constantly monitored, understood, and evaluated. You must be in good health and have stamina to respond effectively during life-threatening emergencies, remaining focused on the work at hand; have emotional stability to cope with human suffering, providing comfort to patient and family; and at times, have the willingness to educate individuals, families and groups about good health and hygiene.

Having the right skills, knowledge, and abilities are necessary to perform the many daily tasks of providing health care. The accompanying tables list by importance some of the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities that are considered assets for a successful career in nursing.

Overall, nurses should build skills in speaking, service orientation, reading comprehension, social perceptiveness, and critical thinking. Good speaking skills are essential for registered nurses who must be able to convey information effectively to staff and patients. RNs are often involved in teaching people about health-related topics and must be able to communicate information clearly. In addition, RNs should have good judgment and decision-making skills and coordination.

Active listening is of foremost importance for licensed practical nurses who should be attentive to what people are saying, understand the points being made, ask appropriate questions, and not interrupt at inappropriate times.

**Skills Considered Important for Nursing Occupations
(Overall Importance & Ranked by Importance for Each Nursing Occupation)**

Skills	Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses
Speaking - Talking to others to convey information effectively.	1	4
Service Orientation - Actively looking for ways to help people.	2	2
Reading Comprehension - Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents	3	3
Social Perceptiveness - Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.	4	7
Critical Thinking - Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.	6	6
Active Listening - Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.		1
Judgment and Decision Making - Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.	5	
Monitoring - Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.		5
Coordination - Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.	7	

Source: O*Net Online, National O*NET Consortium, <http://online.onetcenter.org> , 2003

Nurses should possess the knowledge of medicine and dentistry, biology, customer and personal service, and chemistry to perform effectively their nursing duties. It is also important for RNs to know about therapy and counseling.

Licensed practical nurses should acquire the knowledge of psychology to better assess human behavior and performance. Knowledge of administrative and clerical duties will also benefit LPNs. Depending on where they work, LPNs may be assigned some clerical duties.

**Knowledge Considered Important for Nursing Occupations
(Overall Importance & Ranked by Importance for Each Nursing Occupation)**

Knowledge	Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses
Medicine and Dentistry - Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.	1	1
Biology - Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.	2	3
Customer and Personal Service - Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.	3	2
Chemistry - Knowledge of the chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.	4	6
Psychology - Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.		4
Therapy and Counseling - Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.	5	
Clerical - Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.		5

Source: O*Net Online, National O*NET Consortium, <http://online.onetcenter.org>, 2003.

Abilities determined important for both nursing occupations include being able to communicate information and ideas effectively, to listen to and understand information and ideas presented, to tell when something is wrong, and to see details at a close range. Furthermore, RNs need to possess specific abilities such as communicating information and

ideas in writing so that staff can understand, be able to piece together information to form rules or conclusions, and be able to order and memorize information.

**Abilities Considered Important for Nursing Occupations
(Overall Importance & Ranked by Importance for Each Nursing Occupation)**

Abilities	Registered Nurses	Licensed Practical Nurses
Oral Expression - The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.	1	1
Oral Comprehension - The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.	2	2
Problem Sensitivity - The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.	3	3
Near Vision - The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).	8	5
Written Comprehension - The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.	4	
Arm-Hand Steadiness - The ability to keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.		4
Written Expression - The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.	5	
Inductive Reasoning - The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).	6	
Information Ordering - The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).	7	
Memorization - The ability to remember information such as words, numbers, pictures, and procedures.	9	

Source: O*Net Online, National O*NET Consortium, <http://online.onetcenter.org>, 2003.

Career Advancements...

LPNs may advance to supervisory positions. They may also continue their nursing education and become registered nurses.

RNs with a bachelor's degree may advance to supervisory or administrative positions. Generally, other career advancements for RNs require further education and/or training. Career opportunities include nurse administrators, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialist, nurse anesthetists, instructors of nursing programs and researchers.

Useful Information...

Program Providers:

University of Hawaii at Manoa Phone (808) 956-8939
Internet Link: <http://www.nursing.hawaii.edu>
Registered Nurses, Advance Practice Nursing, Masters and PhD in Nursing

University of Hawaii at Hilo Phone (808) 974-7414
Internet Link: <http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu>
Registered Nursing

Hawaii Pacific University Phone (808) 544-0287
Registered and Practical Nursing

University Of Phoenix Phone (808) 536-2686
Registered Nursing

Hawaii Community College Phone (808) 974-7661
Registered and Practical Nursing

Kapiolani Community College Phone (808) 734-9559
Registered and Practical Nursing

Kauai Community College Phone (808) 245-8225
Internet Link: <http://www.kauaicc.hawaii.edu>
Registered and Practical Nursing

Maui Community College Phone (808) 984-3517
Internet Link: <http://mauicc.hawaii.edu>
Registered and Practical Nursing

Licensing Board: (Licensed Practical, Registered, and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses)

Board of Nursing
Professional and Vocational Licensing Division
Hawaii State Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs
P.O. Box 3469
(1010 Richards Street., 1st Floor, Honolulu, HI 96813)
Honolulu, HI 96801
(808) 586-3000

Others:

American Nurses Association
Internet Link: <http://www.nursingworld.org>

National League for Nursing
<http://www.nln.org/>

Sources...

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University of Hawaii School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, web site <http://www.nursing.hawaii.edu>.